



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

languages or other sciences? Shall the future political economist now study nothing but economics? Some of the latest books on this subject draw freely from mathematics for illustration. And so on for others. No one ought to shut himself up with his favorite pursuit and close the doors to outside knowledge. The true conception of the worth of these last two years will still demand of the student, though in less degree, some of both literature and science. The literary man must not be unscientific in his thought, nor the scientific man unpolished and uncultured in his work.

The determination of how much literature and how much science is the proper distribution for these two years in both courses is difficult and must be left to the different faculties.

---

## THE PROPER LIMITATIONS OF THE ELECTIVE SYSTEM OF COLLEGE STUDIES

BY G. W. MILES

America has been called a wasteful nation, but of all our wastefulness, we waste more boys than any other product. There is an utter lack of intelligent system in the minds of the American people regarding the proper way in which to educate a boy, and the courses of study that should be prescribed for him. We find men in this country sitting in their back offices, in a purely commercial atmosphere, upon whom rest the sacred obligation of parentage, and flippantly, ill-advisedly, and dogmatically blocking out a plan of education, or course of study, for their sons, and usually capping it with the remark "that if he don't like that I will put him to work," and the result is that a young life is forced to grind up its seedcorn in routine business that should have been planted to bring forth an hundred-fold fruitage in his subsequent life.

Now a company of teachers, such as this assemblage here, may arrange its courses of academic studies, but the attractiveness of those courses and the steady compliance with them depends upon the American parent and the American home. This is the starting point, and without coöperation there and a fully cultivated mind our system and our theories must fall to the ground. It is easy enough to reconcile the difference between the curriculum courses and the elective courses, provided the education of a child is made a living issue and holy passion in the home from the very day of his birth.

But if he is allowed to grow up in wasteful idleness, or if the precious years of his youth are allowed to pass without doing the scholastic work best suited to them, then his whole education gets into bad adjustment and there is no time for this study or for that study, and he finally winds up another victim to our lack of educational foresight.

I made these remarks here in this place as a kind of preface to what I am going to say, and to fortify the only weak point in the suggestions to be offered concerning this whole curriculum and elective discussion.

There are some things which every mind should be trained upon, and to compass these things and conform to the best curriculum it is essential that no years in a young life should be lost, and that his course of academic training should be held steadily in view from the beginning. Otherwise, the best theories of the best teachers must come to the ground, through parental indifference or ignorant commercialism.

I should say, then, that the curriculum plan of collegiate education, and the elective plan, each have elements of strength, and at certain stages of the educational life each fills an essential place in the best development. The natural and logical way is to train a mind first in the curriculum and then allow a certain freedom of mental likes and dislikes of the special objects in life, of scholastic specialties, to be cultivated through the wider liberty of the elective system.

There are some things that every educated man should be forced to study before there is attached to his name the magic letters of an academic degree. First and foremost I should place a thorough, full, complete course in the English language and literature. Next I should place the mathematics, then should come the Latin, and side by side with it the higher glory of the Greek. I need not pause here to enter into a controversy as to the study of Greek. A language and a literature that has enriched the world's thought as the Greek has, that has been the favored vehicle of divine inspiration, through which the word of God was given to men, and which in itself is the most refined and delicately shaded of all human idioms, should never be dropped from the courses in the schools, and my solution for reconciling the conflicting interests of Greek and the modern languages is a simple one. I should require both Greek and French and German in every curriculum, and for every bachelor's degree.

This is the proper solution of the difficulty, not the rejection of the one or the other. There is ample time to learn these languages if the child's education is taken in hand at the proper age. At eleven years

of age let him begin his Latin, at twelve his Greek, and by the time he is seventeen or eighteen he will be ready for your university courses, thoroughly drilled in English, mathematics, Latin, Greek, French, and German, together with the usual preliminaries in the sciences.

The struggle between curriculum courses and elective courses arises, as it were, in an effort to portion out in scraps the hours of an ill-prepared stay at the boy's university. The years that are freighted with the most golden promises and opportunities are those years between eleven and seventeen and eighteen. If these years are properly cared for and utilized, then, as the great province of learning spreads out before him, there is both ability and time to cover a proper curriculum and avail oneself of the electives. The trouble is that there is a greediness like a fever in the blood among our American youth to be done with his education and to be off into the money-making marts of the world.

What would be thought these days of a John Milton, who spent seven years at the university, studying the classics, mathematics, and the modern languages, and then, after getting his degree, retired to his father's country seat, where he further "dedicated himself to closeness and the betterment of his mind?" But let us remember, in our crude haste, that in all those years he was, like his own eagle, purging and unscaling his sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance.

But we must take the American boy as we find him and while the seriously perverted condition in his preparation may interfere with our proper theories, still we must be true to those theories to bring our American educational life at last to its highest development. Then let the colleges insist on a certain curriculum, to be exacted alike from all men wearing the academic degree and, as I said in the beginning, as the first essential part of this curriculum, I should suggest the two great classical languages of the ancient world, together with the three dominating tongues of the modern Christian nations. Of course, a full, complete knowledge of that great parent of all the sciences, mathematics, should accompany this gift of tongues, together with rudimentary instruction in natural science. When this is done what a field of knowledge spreads out before us! When young Bacon, conscious of the insatiable thirst of his intellect, wrote to his matter-of-fact old uncle that he had determined to take all knowledge for his province, even his prophetic vision little dreamed of the manifold forms of knowledge that our modern civilization presents, and which it is necessary for the real university of the present to include in its courses of study. We must settle certain scholarly essentials, and we must also lay the basis

in our schools for a special education according to the purposes and professions in life to be subsequently determined upon. Let the business-man, the lawyer, the doctor, the scientist, the army or navy man, the minister, the journalist, let them all meet on the common ground of a common culture, mastering these five languages, unlocking the bars to these five literatures, and along with it let them all be thoroughly trained in the science of mathematics, together with the usual rudimentary accompaniments in natural science and history, and then he may at will go forth into the fields of his special equipment, of his special tastes, of his particular profession. One of the most stirring facts of our intellectual life in this century has been the breaking away from all mediæval scholasticism, from all dogmatical, religious disputations, and the entering upon the freedom of scientific research and an undreamed of mastery in the details of the learned professions. In order to realize the old Greek motto, "Of doing nothing too much," "Of sowing with the hand, instead of the full sack," we are compelled to establish clearly and simply certain educational essentials, or bases of future development, and holding rigidly to these, then provide, in freedom and amplitude, instruction in all of the noble sciences and subjects, that modern civilization has brought to us. In 1779 Thomas Jefferson was a member of a committee to revise the curriculum of William and Mary College, at that time the wealthiest and most progressive institution of learning in America. The report bore the impress of Jefferson's own mind and was submitted by him. There had been up to this time six professors, one of Hebrew, one for explaining the controversies with heretics, one of rhetoric and logic, one of physics and mathematics, one of Latin and Greek, and one for teaching Indian boys reading, writing, and arithmetic and the principles of the Christian religion. Jefferson's proposal was to make eight professors, one of moral philosophy, one of law and police, one of history, one of mathematics, one of anatomy and medicine, one of natural philosophy and natural history, one of ancient languages, including Hebrew, Chaldee, Mæso-Gothic, Anglo-Saxon, and Old Icelandic; and one of modern languages. There you have the best conception of what a master mind in that day could contribute to what should constitute the college course of study. It was the embryonic American university. Compare, if you please, those eight professorships with what they have grown into in our modern universities, with their great schools of departments of law, medicine, engineering, sciences, and languages. Here is Columbia College, with five teachers in the department of the English

language and literature, all presided over by a dean of the English school. Then we have the romance languages with four or five professors, the Teutonic languages with a like number, making say fifteen professors to teach the so-called modern languages in the old school, one department in old William and Mary College. The multiplication, the specialization in the great general subjects of law and medicine, has been greater still, while the old chair of natural philosophy and natural history has been split into a score of noble subjects and noble professorships, more or less independent of each other. In such a wealth of choice, in such a labyrinth of specialties, should there not be some wise, some firm, some directing hand laid upon the young minds of this generation, some thread of Ariadne to bring them safely into the light out of his labyrinthine ignorance. I believe that the most that we can prescribe are the subjects to which I have referred. These subjects are the keys that will unlock all knowledge, wherever it is found, in any quarter of the world or in any department of thought. After these subjects are learned, then let the student, and those who are interested in his welfare, select subjects to which he will devote his time, tastes, and talents. This leads me to say that I believe the time has come in the life of our American universities to drop the old mediæval or cant terms that have been used to divide the years of the American student's stay at college into periods of freshman, sophomore, junior sophisters, and senior sophisters, so-called. These terms were brought to this country from Cambridge in England, and grafted upon our student life at Harvard College. There was very little occasion for them then and much less now. They are not in keeping with that broad freedom of intellectual life which the closing century has brought to us. Such new wine of knowledge as the new century has in store for us should not be put into such old and shriveled wineskins. There is no reason for saying that four years should arbitrarily determine or terminate the stay of a student at the university. There is no good reason for saying that an academic degree should be measured by four years residence at a seat of learning. In fact, the academic degree is the most deceptive thing in connection with our whole educational system, and therein, above all things else, come the chief perversions of the purposes of educational development. This iron-jacketed tunneling for a degree destroys a great deal of intellectual life. A student was sitting in a learned professor's library, discussing with him his course of study, he was eager to go and pursue to the very limits of knowledge certain favorite subjects that had caught his tastes and

talents, but the professor objected that it was necessary for him to study certain other subjects in order for him to get his degree. The student replied: "What a pity I must give up my education in order to get my degree!"

What is wanted in America is a broad, catholic common sense applied to educational questions, and above all things, a utilization of those golden, youthful years, which, when used aright, will bring boys to our colleges prepared to enter with upright carriage and with a spirit of intelligent devotion upon the service at these temples of learning, then their education will be like the river described in the verses of our American poet and sculptor:

"Fitted for every use like a broad, majestic river,  
Blending its various streams, steadily it flows along,  
Bearing the white-winged ship of poesy over its bosom,  
Laden with spices that come out of the tropical isles;  
Fancy's pleasuring yacht, with its gay and fluttering pennons,  
Logic's frigates of war and the toil-worn barges of trade."

---

## OUR PROPOSED NEW REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMISSION TO COLLEGE

R. W. JONES

THE subject of entrance requirements made by the colleges, and the correlated subject of programs, setting forth the work of the secondary schools, are regarded throughout the country as supremely important. Entrance requirements, and especially the effecting of uniformity in them on the part of the colleges of the southern states, was one of the chief items in the call issued by the faculty of Vanderbilt University, which led to the formation of this association in Atlanta, and this subject, more than any other, engaged the thought of the first meeting; and some phase or other of this same subject has been earnestly considered by each subsequent meeting. Other similar associations have also been wrestling with it. In some other parts of our country there has been felt and expressed a broader, more general interest, if not a more intense interest, than has been shown by our southern colleges and secondary schools. The breadth of the subject, the complexity of it, the varied local conditions to which more or less consideration must be given, conspire to make it a very difficult one; and yet its recognized importance in the estimation of school men justifies and requires the most serious and persistent efforts and study for its wise adjustment; not that it is hoped to state in fixed terms and